

SENATE, No. 1358

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

212th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 9, 2006

Sponsored by:

Senator PAUL A. SARLO

District 36 (Bergen, Essex and Passaic)

Senator THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.

District 21 (Essex, Morris, Somerset and Union)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes "New Jersey Fire and EMS Crisis Intervention Services" telephone hotline; authorizes an annual appropriation.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/9/2006)

1 **AN ACT** establishing a toll-free "Fire and EMS Crisis Intervention
2 Services" telephone hotline and supplementing chapter 27D of
3 Title 52 of the Revised Statutes.

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5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

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8 1. As used in this act:

9 "Division" means the Division of Fire Safety in the Department
10 of Community Affairs; and

11 "University" means the University of Medicine and Dentistry of
12 New Jersey/University Behavioral Health Care.

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14 2. a. The division, in conjunction with the university, shall
15 establish and maintain, on a 24-hour daily basis, a toll-free
16 information "New Jersey Fire and EMS Crisis Intervention
17 Services" telephone hotline. The hotline shall receive and respond
18 to calls from fire and emergency service personnel who have be
19 involved in any event or incident which has produced personal or
20 job-related depression, anxiety, stress or other psychological or
21 emotional tension, trauma or disorder for the fire or emergency
22 service personnel. The operators of the hotline shall seek to
23 identify those callers who should be referred to further debriefing
24 and counseling services, and to provide such referrals.

25 b. The operators of the hotline shall be trained by the division
26 and the university, and, to the greatest extent possible, shall be
27 persons who by experience or education are: (1) familiar with post
28 trauma disorders and the emotional and psychological tensions,
29 depressions and anxieties unique to fire and emergency service
30 personnel; or (2) trained to provide counseling services involving
31 marriage and family life, substance abuse, personal stress
32 management and other emotional or psychological disorders or
33 conditions which may be likely to adversely affect the personal and
34 professional well-being of New Jersey's fire and emergency service
35 personnel.

36 c. To ensure the integrity of the telephone hotline and to
37 encourage fire and emergency service personnel to utilize it, the
38 division and the university shall provide for the confidentiality of
39 the names of the fire and emergency services personnel calling, the
40 information discussed by a caller and operator, and any referrals for
41 further debriefing or counseling; provided, however, the division,
42 after consultation with the university, may, by rule and regulation,
43 establish guidelines providing for the tracking of any fire or
44 emergency services caller who exhibits a severe emotional or
45 psychological disorder or condition which the operator handling the
46 call reasonably believes might result in harm to that caller or others.

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1 condition that it may result in harm to the caller or others.

2 Working together, the division and the university are to train the
3 hotline operators. To the greatest extent possible, these operators
4 are to be persons familiar with post trauma disorders and the
5 emotional and psychological tensions, depressions, and anxieties
6 unique to fire and emergency service personnel, or trained
7 professionals able to provide counseling services involving
8 marriage and family life, substance abuse, personal stress
9 management and other emotional or psychological disorders or
10 conditions that may adversely affect the personal and professional
11 well-being of New Jersey's fire and emergency service personnel.

12 The bill also directs the division, after consultation with the
13 university, to prepare a list of licensed or certified psychiatrists,
14 psychologists, and social workers, qualified counselors, and
15 experienced former fire and emergency services personnel who are
16 willing to accept referrals and provide debriefing and counseling
17 services.

18 The bill calls for an annual appropriation to the Division of Fire
19 Safety from the General Fund to be utilized exclusively for the
20 purposes of funding the operation of the "New Jersey Fire and EMS
21 Crisis Intervention Services" telephone hotline. The bill specifies,
22 however, that the amount so appropriate should not exceed
23 \$200,000 in any fiscal year.